

AMENDMENTS

In The Claims

Please cancel claims 1-8 and 15-19. Please add new claims 20-33. A clean version is offered below.

20. (New) A method of protecting a surface of a ceramic body comprising applying to the surface a slurry composition, wherein the slurry comprises solids and a solvent, wherein the solids comprise:

- a binding agent;
- a ceramic material; and
- at least one boron-containing compound.

21. (New) A method according to claim 20, wherein the ceramic material comprises cordierite.

22. (New) A method according to claim 20, wherein the solvent comprises water.

23. (New) A method according to claim 20, wherein the boron compound is selected from the group consisting of boron carbide, boron butoxide, boron nitride, boron nitrate, and mixtures thereof.

24. (New) A method according to claim 20, wherein the solids have an average particle size of less than about 2.0 micrometers.

25. (New) A method according to claim 20, wherein the ceramic material comprises cordierite, the at least one boron-containing compound is selected from the group consisting of boron carbide, boron nitride, boron butoxide, and mixtures thereof, and the solvent comprises water.

26. (New) A method for producing a surface protected ceramic body, comprising:
impregnating a slurry into the pores of a ceramic body; and
drying the slurry in the pores of the ceramic body to produce the surface
protected ceramic body;

wherein the slurry comprises a boron-containing compound and further comprises a binding agent, a ceramic material different from the material of the ceramic body, and a solvent, wherein the surface protected ceramic body can be heated to 2500 F for 20 hours without cracking.

27. (New) A method according to claim 26, wherein the binding agent comprises silica and the solvent comprises water.

28. (New) A method according to claim 26, wherein the ceramic material comprises cordierite.

29. (New) A method according to claim 26, further comprising firing the dried slurry in the pores.

30. (New) A method according to claim 26, wherein the drying step comprises directing a surface heating source against the surface of the ceramic body.

31. (New) A method according to claim 26, wherein the drying step comprises heating the entire ceramic body.

32. (New) A method according to claim 29, wherein the firing step comprises directing a surface heating source against the surface.

33. (New) A method according to claim 29, wherein the firing source comprises heating the entire ceramic body.